

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HAVANA 00937 271550Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AF-10 HA-05
/077 W

-----016656 271552Z /43

O R 271437Z DEC 77
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 810
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 0937

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP MILI ETRD XJ US CU
SUBJECT: CASTRO LASHES OUT AT US

1. IN MAJOR SPEECH TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PODER POPULAR DECEMBER 24, FIDEL CASTRO DELIVERED MOST SWEEPING CRITIQUE OF US POLICY SINCE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TOOK OFFICE - INCLUDING HARSH AND EMOTIONAL REJECTION OF RECENT USG DECLARATIONS ON CUBAN POLICY IN AFRICA. CASTRO ALSO REBUFFED AND RIDICULED RECENT US (INCLUDING PRESUMABLY SENATORIAL) APPEALS ON BEHALF OF CUBAN NATIONALITY POLITICAL PRISONERS. CASTRO, IN DISCUSSING VARIOUS POLICY ISSUES, SUGGESTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS BEEN MISGUIDED BY HIS ADVISORS AND THAT, UNLESS USG POLICY CHANGES, THE CUBANS WILL "FIGHT AGAINST" PRESIDENT CARTER, AS THEY HAVE AGAINST PREVIOUS AMERICAN PRESIDENTS.

2. MAJOR THEME OF CASTRO SPEECH WAS TO LAY OUT LONG-TERM STRATEGY OF CONSUMER SACRIFICE AND HEIGHTENED INVESTMENT TO REDUCE CUBA'S DEPENDENCE ON WEST. WHILE ADMITTING UTILITY OF US-CUBAN RAPPROCHMENT, CASTRO SOUGHT TO CONVEY IMPRESSION THAT HE IS DEALING WITH US FROM POSITION OF RELATIVE STRENGTH AND THAT HE NEED NOT BE MOVED BY US PRESSURES AND BLANDISHMENTS. HE AGAIN APPEARED TO CONDITION FURTHER PROGRESS ON CONTENTIOUS US-CUBAN ISSUES (E.G., RELEASE OF
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REMAINING AMCIT POLITICAL PRISONERS) ON FULL OR PARTIAL LIFTING OF US EMBARGO, WHICH HE TERMED AN IMMORAL NEGOTIATING ARM OF US.

3. DETAILS FOLLOW IN SEPTTEL.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST CASTRO SPEECH SINCE SEPTEMBER OPENING OF INTERESTS SECTIONS IN WHICH UNDERLYING PREMISE IS THAT US-CUBAN

RELATIONS MAY JUST LIKELY DETERIORATE AS IMPROVE. LOWERING OF EXPECTATIONS IN THIS REGARD MAY BE INTENDED TO CONDITION CUBAN PUBLIC OPINION IN EVENT NORMALIZATION PROCESS COMES TO NOUGHT, TO REAFFIRM CUBAN LOYALTY TO USSR AT TIME OF SENSITIVE MOSCOW-HAVANA ECONOMIC NEGOTIATIONS, AND TO PLACE TACTICAL PRESSURE ON US ADMINISTRATION TO SOFTEN EMBARGO.

5. CASTRO WAS OBVIOUSLY EMOTIONALLY AROUSED IN THIS SPEECH, AND IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER OR HOW HIS FIERY LINE WILL BE REFLECTED IN EARLY POLICY DECISIONS AND ACTIONS. UPCOMING VISIT OF CODEL REUSS MAY PERMIT FURTHER INSIGHTS. USINT RECOMMENDS LOW-KEY USG OFFICIAL REACTION TO CASTRO'S ATTACK, EMPHASIZING THAT NORMALIZATION IS AT BEST A DIFFICULT PROCESS AND THAT ACTIONS ON BOTH SIDES ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN WORDS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPEECHES, ANTIAMERICAN FEELING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977HAVANA00937
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770482-0141
Format: TEL
From: HAVANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771216/aaaaandm.tel
Line Count: 77
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f4600efd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 128545
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CASTRO LASHES OUT AT US
TAGS: PDIP, MILI, ETRD, XJ, US, CU, (CASTRO RUZ, FIDEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f4600efd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009